

18. Second World War and Nationalist Response

▪ Haripura Session, 1938:

President Bose- he was instrumental in setting up National Planning Commission for the economic development of the country through planning. Also, the session adopted a resolution that the Congress would give moral support to those who were agitating against the governance in the princely states.

▪ Tripuri Crisis:

- For the 1939 elections of the President of Congress, Subhash announced his candidature.
- Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, was the candidate supported by Gandhiji.
- The result was declared on January 29, 1939 and Subhash secured 1580 Votes. Sitaramaya got 1377 votes. Thus, Subhash winning by a narrow but clear margin
- However, Gandhi as a personal blow took the defeat of Sitaramayya. He said "... I am glad of his (Subhash's) victory....and since I was instrumental in inducing Dr. Pattabhi not to withdraw his name after Maulana Azad Sahib done so; the defeat is more mine than his...."
- The Congress Working committee was still controlled by the followers of Gandhi. Thus, Subhash might reign but could not rule.
- In March 1939, Congress met at annual session at Tripuri near Jabalpur.
- The **working committee** of the Congress, is **not elected, but nominated by the president**; the election of the president is thus a constitutional opportunity through which the membership expressed the nature of the leadership of the Congress.
- Subhash Bose had accused the working committee leaders of being ready to reach a compromise with the government on the matter of federation.

- Now, those leaders felt they could not work with a president who had publicly cast doubts on their nationalistic principles and resigned from the working committee.
- Bose in his presidential speech of Tripuri session spoke of giving 6-month ultimatum to British to grant the independence.
- If the ultimatum was rejected, he wanted to start a civil disobedience movement.
- Gandhi, on the other hand, was firm in the belief that it was **not the time for such ultimatums as neither the Congress nor the masses were yet ready** for struggle.

- Gandhi was also aware that there were communal discord and class strife and a lack of unified vision.
- A resolution moved by **Govind Ballabh Pant** asking Bose to nominate CWC according to Gandhiji's wishes. Bose refused to do so.
- **Bose** wanted an **immediate struggle led by Gandhi**, whereas **Gandhi** was firm in his belief that the **time was not ripe** for struggle
- Gandhi was not willing to lead a Congress struggle based on the radical lines preferred by Bose, even as Bose was not willing to compromise on his ideas.
- The members preferred a united Congress led by Gandhi. In this circumstance, Bose had no other choice but to resign.
- **Bose resigned from President's post in April 1939.**
- After his resignation, Rajendra Prasad became the president of congress.
- In May, **1939**: After resigning from INC, Bose and his followers formed the **Forward Bloc** as a **new party within the Congress.**

Gandhi and Bose: Similarities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both had immense respect for one another. • Both were religious men. • They disliked communism • They worked against untouchability and women's emancipation

Gandhi and Bose: Ideological Differences

GANDHI	BOSE
Firm believer of Ahimsa to gain any goal	He believed that violent resistance alone could oust the imperial power from India
For him, means were as important as ends	Bose had his eye on the result. Only the end was important to him.
Propagated the concept of Ramarajya/Self-governance	He was a supporter of democracy
Gandhiji was against the	He was attracted towards

military and its actions	the military discipline
He dismissed Capitalism and Western Socialism . He brought in the idea of Sarvodaya and Trusteeship	Bose was in favour of Industrialisation and modernization. He was attracted by Socialism .
He was a man of religion and had a steadfast view on religion	Bose believed in upanishadic teachings . He was for total non-discrimination on the basis of religion. He was a secularist .
His goals for society were eradication of untouchability & maintaining varna distinctions of caste system	Bose propagated an egalitarian, casteless and classless society .
Gandhi spoke of free and compulsory education for all between 7-14 years of age. His Nai Talim aimed at imparting education that would lead to freedom of ignorance, illiteracy etc., He also emphasized on Vocational training .	Bose was for higher education especially in the technical and scientific fields .

Second World War and Nationalist Response:

- On September 3 1939, GoI declared support for WW II without consulting Indians.
- Though Congress didn't like it, they offered to cooperate in the war effort, with two basic conditions:
 - a. After the war, a constituent assembly should be convened to determine political structure of a free India.
 - b. Immediately, some form of a genuinely responsible government should be established at the Centre.
- The offer was **rejected by Linlithgow**, the viceroy. The Congress argued that these

conditions were necessary to win public opinion for war.

CWC Meeting at Wardha: To Adopt Official Position. Here, different opinions were voiced on the question of Indian support to British war efforts. It is summarised as follows:

Gandhi	Bose	Nehru
Because of his total dislike of the fascist ideology, advocated an unconditional support to the Allied powers. He said that he was not willing to embarrass the British government during the war.	Along with other sociologists like Acharya Narendra Dev & Jayaprakash Narayan. In their opinion, the war was being fought by imperialists on both sides; each side wanted to protect its colonial possessions and gain more territories thus neither side be supported. They were of the view that it was the ideal time to launch a civil disobedience movement, and thus take advantage of the situation and snatch freedom from Britain	He believed that justice was on the side of Britain, France and Poland, but he also believed that Britain and France were imperialist powers thus, he, advocated no Indian participation till India itself was free. However, at the same time, no advantage was to be taken of Britain's difficulty by starting an immediate civil disobedience movement.

- Gandhi was more or less isolated in his stand. In the end he decided to go with Nehru's position, which was adopted by the Congress Working Committee

The **CWC resolution** condemned Fascist aggression. It said that:

1. India could not be party to a war being fought, on the face of it, for democratic freedom, while that freedom was being denied to India;
2. If Britain was fighting for democracy and freedom, it should be proved by ending imperialism in its colonies and establishing full democracy in India;
3. The government should declare its war aims soon and, also, as to how the principles of

democracy were to be applied to India after the war.

Government's Attitude and Congress Response:

- Government response was negative and it tried to use Muslims and Princes against the INC.
- Government's hidden agenda: **British policy was "to take advantage of the war to regain the lost ground from the Congress"** by provoking the Congress into a confrontation with the government and then using the extraordinary situation to acquire draconian powers.
- **Defence of India Ordinance** had been enforced the day the War was declared, thus restricting civil liberties.
- In May 1940, a top-secret Draft Revolutionary Movement Ordinance had been prepared, aimed at launching crippling pre-emptive strikes on the Congress.
- Congress as well as Gandhi responded sharply to this action and asked congress ministry to resign in province at CWC meeting in October 1939.
- The resignation of congress ministry was celebrated by **league** as **day of deliverance**
- Though the question of immediate mass struggle arose again, Gandhi and his supporters were not in its favour.
- They instead advocated toning up the Congress organisation, carrying on political work among the masses, and negotiating till all possibilities of a negotiated settlement were exhausted.

▪ **Pakistan Resolution-Lahore (March 1940):**

- The Muslim League passed a resolution calling for "grouping of geographically contiguous areas where Muslims are in majority (North-West, East) into independent states in which
- Constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign and adequate safeguards to Muslims where they are in minority".

▪ **August offer:**

- Due to turn of events in WW II (rapid advance of Nazi forces in Europe), congress decided to help British if they allow to form interim government. But GoI rejected it and came up with August offer,
 - **Dominion status** as the objective for India.
 - **Expansion of viceroy's executive council** which would have a majority of Indians (who would be drawn from major political parties).
 - **Setting up of a constituent assembly after the war** where mainly Indians would decide the constitution according to their social, economic and political conceptions, subject to fulfilment of the obligation of the government regarding defence, minority rights, treaties with States, all India services.
 - **No future constitution** to be adopted **without the consent of minorities**.
- **Responses:** Nehru rejected it by saying "Dominion status concept is dead as a doornail" and Gandhi has similar opinion. However Muslim league were happy with veto assurance.
- **Evaluation:** For the first time accepted: Dominion status (explicitly), Indians request to form constituent council to frame constitution for themselves.
- In July 1941, the viceroy's executive council was enlarged to give the Indians a majority of 8 out of 12 for the first time, but the British remained in charge of defence, finance and home. National Defence Council was setup with purely advisory functions.

▪ **Individual Satyagraha-1940:**

The aims of launching individual satyagraha were-

- (i) To show that nationalist patience was not due to weakness.
- (ii) To express people's feeling that they were not interested in the war and that they made no distinction between Nazism and the double autocracy that ruled India.
- (iii) To give another opportunity to the government to accept Congress' demands peacefully.

- The demand of the satyagrahi would be the freedom of speech against the war through an anti-war declaration and they were supposed to march towards Delhi to convert movement into "Delhi Chalo Movement"
VinobaBhave was the first to offer the Satyagraha, Nehru, the second and Brahma was the third.
- In 1941, after the release of Congress leaders, it was time to designate successor of Gandhi.
- **Gandhi preferred Nehru to the alternatives** because he most reliably reflected the pluralist, inclusive idea of India that the Mahatma himself stood for.

Gandhi and Nehru

GANDHI	NEHRU
He believed deeply in his own version of God	Nehru was indifferent to religion
Gandhi called for the reviving of the rural economy	believed that industrialisation was the only solution to the acute and widespread poverty of India
Gandhi was sceptical of State power, trusting instead to the conscience and willingness of individuals and communities	Nehru believed in the powers of the modern State to elevate and reform society
• Both believed in Non-violence and democratic form of Government.	

▪ **Cripps mission:**

In March 1942, a mission headed by Stafford Cripps was sent to India with constitutional proposals to seek Indian support for the war.

Reasons:

- Japan invasion was at India's door and so India's support was important, and even allied powers (USA, USSR) were pressurising British for the same.
- Indian nationalists had agreed to support the Allied cause if substantial power was transferred immediately and complete independence given after the war.

Main clauses:

1. Dominion status to India and permission to opt out of Commonwealth and free to join any international bodies, including UN.
2. After the end of the war, a constituent assembly would be convened to frame a new constitution. Members of this assembly would be partly elected by the provincial assemblies through proportional representation and partly nominated by the princes
3. The British government would accept the new constitution subject to two conditions:
 - (i) Any province not willing to join the Union could have a separate constitution and form a separate Union.
 - (ii) The new constitution making body and the British government would negotiate a treaty to effect the transfer of power and to safeguard racial and religious minorities.
4. In the meantime, defence of India would remain in British hands and the governor-general's powers would remain intact.

The proposals differed from those offered in the past in many aspects.

- The making of the constitution was to be solely in Indian hands now (and not 'mainly' in Indian hands-as contained in the August Offer).
- A concrete plan was provided for the constituent assembly.
- Option was available to any province to have a separate constitution-a blueprint for India's partition

Reasons for failure of Cripps Mission:

- The Congress objected to- dominion status, right of provinces to secede, retention of governor general supremacy, no immediate transfer of power.
- Nehru and Maulana Azad were the official negotiators for the Congress.
- The **Muslim League** objected to-idea of a single Indian Union, did not like the machinery for the creation of a constituent assembly, Pakistan not being explicitly offered.
- Further Churchill (British prime minister), Amery (secretary of state) Linlithgow consistently torpedoed Cripps's effort.
- Gandhiji called Cripps Mission as, '**A post dated Cheque**'

▪ Quit India Movement (1942):

Reasons:

- The failure of the Cripps Mission to solve the constitutional deadlock exposed Britain's unchanged attitude on constitutional advance
- There was popular discontent because of rising prices and shortage of rice, salt, etc.,
- News of reverses suffered by the British in South-East Asia and an imminent British collapse enhanced popular willingness to give expression to discontent.
- The leadership wanted to condition the masses for a possible Japanese invasion.

Quit India Resolution	Gandhi's General Instructions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In July 1942, CWC met at Wardha and Quit India Resolution adopted. It was ratified at Congress meeting at Gowalia Tank, Bombay. <p>The meeting resolved to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• demand an immediate end to British rule in India.• declare commitment of free India to defend itself against all types of Fascism and imperialism.• form a provisional Government of India after British withdrawal.• sanction a civil disobedience movement against British rule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government servants: Do not resign but declare your allegiance to the Congress.• Soldiers: Do not leave the Army but do not fire on Compatriots.• Students: If confident, leave studies.• Peasants: If zamindars are anti-government, pay mutually agreed rent, and if not, do not pay rent.• Princes: Support the masses and accept sovereignty of your people.• Princely states' people: Support the ruler only if he is anti-government and declare yourselves to be a part of the Indian nation.